The Reconstructionist

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dicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of
'ael's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

is published bi-weekly for twenty consecutive issues, starting in October, by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, Inc., 15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y. Subscription $2.00 per year; 10c per copy; foreign 25c extra; membership in the Foundation, $5.00 per year, including subscription to *The Reconstructionist*. Reentered as second class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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The Reconstructionist

Vol. XIII. March 7, 1947 Adar 15, 5707 No. 2

EDITORIALS

THE JEWISH PROBLEM GOES TO THE UNITED NATIONS

GREAT Britain's proposal to submit the problem of the future of Eretz Yisrael—and, we may add, the future of the Jewish people, which depends on it—to the UN, is one which, if made and carried out in good faith, Jews everywhere should welcome. The Jewish problem is a world problem and its solution is dependent, as Herzl saw from the beginning, on the recognition of our claim to Eretz Yisrael *"öffentlich-rechtlich,"* that is to say by international law. We can put more trust in the conscience of mankind, if our case is fairly put before it, than we can in that of the British government which is trying desperately to hold together an anachronistic empire and is ready to sacrifice any principle and any non-British people to the expediencies of British power politics.

We believe that it should not be too difficult to make the United Nations see, as the League of Nations saw in its day, that the Jewish people like every other people, has a right to exist; that its existence depends on its having a local habitation where its civilization can flourish; that, finally, Palestine is the natural locale for the Jewish national home, both on historic grounds and because world Jewry, relying on the terms of the Mandate, has sunk blood and treasure into that land and reclaimed it from the desert. How insecure Jewish life is without a national home was made clear by Hitler. Relying on the prevalence of anti-Semitism, he was able to effect the annihilation of 6,000,000 of our people, a third of our total population. Surely the world which looked upon that slaughter without preventing it or offering a haven of escape, should be troubled in its mind about the situation of Jewry; it should repent of that anti-Semitism which made possible this most successful of the Nazi attempts at genocide. And if the world is penitent, the least it can do by way of atonement is to assure the continued existence of Jewry as a people with a recognized national home.

We feel that we can face the issue in the UN with confidence, *if the problem is presented in good faith.* That proviso, however, is important. Two tests may be applied: (1) that, until the problem can be dealt with by the United Nations, Great Britain carry out the letter and spirit of the Mandate entrusted to her by the League of Nations, and (2) that the Jewish people be given a voice in the UN deliberations when the Palestine problem is put on the agenda.

With regard to the first of these propositions, it is clear that if Great Britain is to come before the United Nations with

clean hands, she must in the meantime govern Palestine in accordance with the Mandate. That would mean the abrogation of the restrictions on immigration and land sales which the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations had pronounced illegal. For as Dr. Emanuel Neumann pointed out on his return from London, Article 80 of the UN Charter reads:

"Except as may be agreed upon in individual trusteeship agreements . . . placing each territory under the trusteeship system, and until such agreements have been concluded, nothing in this chapter shall be construed in or of itself to alter in any manner the rights whatsoever of any states or any peoples or the terms of existing international instruments to which members of the United Nations may respectively be parties."

As for the second proposition demanded by good faith, that the Jewish people be given a voice in the UN in all matters affecting Palestine, that is but elementary justice. No nation may have its destiny disposed of by others without its being given a voice in the deliberations about its own future. And that the Jews do, in a sense, constitute a national entity even though they lack a state at present, is implied in the very term "national home" which is used in the Mandate.

There may be a disposition in some quarters to deny the Jews representation on the ground that Jewry is not a nation in the ordinary political sense, which involves the existence of sovereignty over a definite territory. To invoke such a rule is, however, irrational. It is tantamount to saying: because the Jews lack and need a national home, they are disqualified from arguing their claims to a national home. The representation of Jewry at the United Nations hearing may be unprecedented, but the whole situation of Jewry in the world today is without precedent. It is precisely the anomalous situation of Jewry in the modern world which makes of the Jewish problem one with which UN must reckon. Were UN to act in all respects by precedent it might as well disband, for a renewal of the *status quo ante* can result only in the repetition of the circumstances that led to the last war and must lead to the next. Only as UN has the vision and courage to establish new precedents will it be able to safeguard humanity against a third world war. At the time that the mandate system was introduced by the League of Nations there was no precedent for such action nor did UN itself hesitate to blaze a new trail in the matter of the war guilt trials.

If Great Britain is really looking to a just solution of the Palestine problem, it will seek honorably to discharge its obligation under the Mandate and will urge that the Jewish People be properly represented in the United Nations through the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

* * *

Since the above was written, Bevin's address to Parliament has made it evident that, if he has his way, Great Britain will *not* act in good faith. Perhaps it is just as well that he has finally, by his own words, torn away the veil of hypocrisy which concealed his determination to liquidate Zionism. He now contends that Jewry is only a religious community and does not need a national home. But in that event, since the Jews had not, before the issuing of the Balfour Declaration been denied freedom of religion in Palestine, Great Britain would have no claim entitling it to govern that country, except one founded on the very dubious right of conquest.

But if Bevin's words reveal that he does not intend to deal in good faith with the Jewish people—or for that matter with

the United States and the other nations that acquiesced in Great Britain's being given the Mandate—the indignation with which his words were greeted in Parliament, shows that the voice of conscience is not silent in Great Britain. Particularly is this manifest in the resentment of the Labor M.P.'s at Bevin's betrayal of his party's social ideals.

And certainly in America, his tactless slurs on our government will not help him to pull the wool over the eyes of the American people. It will not dissuade them from pressing their own rights to a voice in Palestinian affairs and pursuing the pro-Zionist policy to which both major parties in American political life stand committed.

WHERE JEWS MAY SYMPATHIZE WITH THE BRITISH

THE plain Englishman and his family are suffering today as they have not suffered since the blitz. The weather is freezing, and there is neither enough heat nor light. They are restricted in their cooking, and they must queue up for practically all of the necessities of life. It is always difficult to tell at great distance whether or not the average Englishman is altogether conscious of the full implication of his own dilemma, whether he is aware that a drama is being enacted in which he is the most conspicuous actor. But seen from the vantage point of our own country the sufferings of the English people are part of a great struggle, testing, to paraphrase Lincoln's immortal words, whether an economy so conceived and so dedicated can long endure.

The present British government has embarked upon a colossal undertaking. It is devoted to socializing the basic industries of the nation, to provide a fuller and richer life for all its people. It has undertaken this task at a crucial moment in the history of the world, and particularly in the history of the British empire. It has undertaken the task with a difficult heritage to cope with. The governments preceding this one have bequeathed to the Labor government cities in ruins, credits at their lowest ebb and a debilitated industry.

At the present time the coal mines are the focal point of the struggle. Equipment is inadequate to the task of producing sufficient coal for the increased needs. Besides, the men are not working at maximum because they realize that the additional income they might derive from working a full week would not bring them any additional goods or services, for these are at present unavailable. On this side of the Atlantic voices are heard already pronouncing the funeral oration over socialism, as a dead cause, a perhaps ignoble experiment. It won't work, they say. On the other hand, correspondents report that, while the suffering is great and the dissatisfaction increasing, all agree that if the Conservatives were in power it would undoubtedly be worse.

There are probably many Jews who look upon the whole situation with a certain perverted satisfaction. The British are terrorizing our people in Eretz Yisrael. They are keeping our refugees from its shores; they are making life impossible for the Yishuv. They are spending milions of pounds to accomplish these brutal purposes. No wonder that the Englishman at home gets little sympathy from some Jewish observers. It would be a good thing, they say, for *them* to suffer a little and to understand how it feels. This is quite understandable, but it does not do justice to the situation; for that the following two points must be considered:

1. In England today there is taking place one of the most important experiments in social history, namely a demo-

cratic socialism guaranteeing human rights, but at the same time planning for the common welfare. The Labor government domestically is attempting to find a way between the communism of the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and the individualistic economy of our own country and others on the other hand. If it succeeds, it will prove to be the way out of the predicament of modern industrial society. Everyone, Jew and non-Jew alike has a stake in the success of this experiment.

2. So far as Jews are concerned, in spite of the dark picture of the moment, there is every reason to believe that in the long run there will be more to be gained by a progressive and liberal-minded Yishuv in Palestine from a socialist Labor government than from the old-line conservative imperialistic government. There is nothing to be gained by the collapse of the present experiment. What begins as reform on the domestic scene must eventually develop into reform in the empire as a whole. We should be cutting our noses to spite our faces if we prayed for the defeat of the present gallant effort. It is time for us to repeat the slogan which expresses the Zionist attitude during the war: "We shall fight with the British in the war as though there were no White Paper. We shall fight the White Paper as though there were no war." Today the version of that slogan should be: "We shall do everything in our power to help save the present government as though there were no deportations to Cyprus. We shall fight the deportations to Cyprus as though there were no liberal government in England."

DEMOCRACY AT STAKE

THE New York *Times* performed a public service with its recent survey on the condition of American education. In a comprehensive, twelve-installment report, Dr. Benjamin Fine, educational editor, presente an appalling picture of underpaid teach ers, poorly equipped buildings, ove crowded classes, lack of text books, pape chalk and other teaching aids, and mi lions of miseducated and uneducated chi dren. Dr. Fine quotes figures to show tha Americans spend seven billion dollars year on liquor and three billion on toba co, but spend far less than three billio on education. Of particular concer among the evils revealed by the survey the poor treatment accorded teachers.

The survey revealed that America teachers earn an average of $37 per wee and that many hundreds of thousands c them receive even less. As a result, th public school system is rapidly losing i teaching personnel. Teachers are leavin the field for more lucrative occupation Educators throughout the country a alarmed, and many fear further drai on the already depleted teaching sta Even if something is done to check th exodus, so many incompetent teachers a now employed that the standards American education are extremely low.

All this is a serious threat to democrac We have had ample demonstration in r cent years of the success of indoctrinati by totalitarian regimes. Dictators, appa ently, know how to make good use their teachers. It can be truthfully sa that Hitler's greatest weapons were schools. That the teachers in t Nazi schools performed their ta well is amply demonstrated in the you Nazis who now infest Germany. Dem racy, too, must learn to use its educat to advantage. Its educational task, ho ever, is more complex than that of tot tarianism. For the latter, in its appeal prejudice, can afford to use teachers w a limited fund of knowledge, provi they are devoted to the totalitarian id Democracy, on the other hand, requ teachers who are equipped with a w

range of information, who think for themselves and who know how to impart that information and ability to think to their students. Obviously, democratic education must be an expensive matter.

One of the signs of the crisis is the revolt of the teachers themselves against prevailing conditions. Many people may be tempted to denounce the teachers for some of the forms that this revolt has taken. But while the current teachers' strikes are blocks to an efficient educational program, they serve a useful purpose. They bring effectively to the notice of the public the cause of many of our national ills—inefficient and insufficient education. Many people who were previously unaware of the plight of American education have been aroused. They have come to realize that the present lack of concern for education is symptomatic of a willingness to be swayed by prejudice and to deprecate the importance of reason and knowledge.

We cannot hope to fulfill the potentialities of our democracy unless we develop a population that can act intelligently. The present threat to democracy, in the form of an expanding igorance resulting from poor education, cannot be ignored. American teachers must be paid decent salaries, so that they can perform their sacred task with security for themselves and their families.

REALITIES AND VALUES

THE YISHUV IS PREPARING TO send 200 teachers to DP camps in Germany, Austria and Italy. The Jews in these camps need teachers and the best place from which they could get them is Eretz Yisrael. For Eretz Yisrael is the land on which the DPs' hearts are set. Contact with teachers from the Yishuv will both give them needed encouragement and make possible their preparation for eventual *aliyah*.

However, as pointed out by Gershon Gelbart in his article in our preceding issue, the Jews of Europe who are not DPs also lack teachers. Their need is for teachers who will help them make a wholesome adjustment to conditions of life in the diaspora, since there is not much likelihood that most of them will migrate. For them teachers should be sent from America. Or perhaps some of their own number might be trained in American schools and colleges to return as teachers to their own communities. In either case, American Jewry should supply the means.

▼

WE ARE SOMETIMES ASKED why we saw fit to eliminate from the Reconstructionist Sabbath Prayer Book the references to a personal Messiah. Most Jews construe these passages symbolically as mere expressions of our hopes for the redemption of Israel and of mankind. And even if some should construe them literally, what harm would that do?

The following item of news taken from *Trend of Events* (February 21) indicates the danger.

A delegation of the Agudat Yisrael recently advised the High Commissioner that the Jewish struggle for statehood in Palestine was pointless since the Messiah is calculated to arrive in 1990.

The Agudat Yisrael is a powerful organization. Not all of its members may agree as to the exact date of the Messiah's coming, but they all oppose political Zionism on religious grounds. A principal reason for their opposition is that they rely on the divine promise of the coming of the Messiah.

In the present crucial moment, we dare not encourage the notion that Jews should depend for their salvation on the supernatural redemption which the Messiah is to effect. Bevin might find it even

more convenient to leave the solution of the Jewish problem to the Messiah than to leave it to the UN. We want our services to encourage Zionism not Agudaism.

▼

Our attention has recently been called to the Jewish Peace Fellowship which has been organized "to give expression to the belief that Judaism provides inspiration and sanction for a pacifist philosophy of life, . . . to be of assistance to Jewish conscientious objectors," and, in other ways, "to engage in constructive social action in behalf of peace and justice," in cooperation with other groups of similar aim.

The organization has issued an appeal to the Jews of Eretz Yisrael against the use of violence for achieving Zionist goals. The appeal, however, expresses approval of the goals themselves and pays a gracious tribute to the constructive achievements of the Yishuv, and to the spirit of *havlagah* (self-restraint) and of self-sacrifice that characterize so much of its activity.

We are not convinced pacifists, but we are glad to acknowledge that our Jewish pacifists are loyal Jews, as their attitude toward Zionist aspirations testifies. Their statement should prove helpful to the cause. It demonstrates that not only Jewish "terrorists" at one extreme but also Jewish pacifists at the other join with the bulk of Jewry in the acceptance of Zionist aims, however Jews may differ among themselves on the means of achieving them.

▼

The American Jewish Congress calls attention to "a disturbing lack of compliance" with the Ives-Quinn Law, the New York state law against discrimination in employment. At the time of its passage, that law was hailed as marking a great step forward on the road to fair employment practices. It is even now being used as a model for similar legislation by other states.

Will Maslow, Director of the Commission on Law and Social Action of the Congress, tells how they discovered the lack of compliance. Their investigators telephoned to two-thirds of the licensed "white collar" employment agencies in New York City and, without identifying themselves, asked that a "white Protestant" be referred. One hundred and seven of 121 agencies, or 88 per cent were willing to accept such an illegal order.

The New York law is a good law, but problems are rarely solved by merely passing laws about them. We must also be vigilant in insisting on the enforcement of the laws.

▼

We learn from *Religious News Service* (February 10, 1947) that the new constitution which is being considered by the Constituent Assembly of Italy has a clause embodying the right of asylum for political refugees, which has for centuries been a tradition of the Vatican. The clause declares that foreigners deprived of liberties guaranteed under the Italian constitution "have the right of asylum on Italian territory" and may not be extradited on charges of "political crimes."

If this provision is adopted, it will doubtless bring to Italy many Catholics who have incurred the wrath of Communist-dominated governments. We wonder will Italy provide an equally hospitable refuge for those fleeing from persecution at the hands of tyrannical regimes in Catholic countries.

There is no clause guaranteeing the right of asylum in the United States Constitution, but in the early days of our Republic, the policy of welcoming refugees from persecution was well established

(*Continued on Page* 19)

A Weather Report on 'Our Religious Climate'

By MORDECAI L. BRILL

JUDAH Goldin in his recent article "Living in a Religious Climate," (Rec. Vol. XII, No. 18), points to the mediocrity of our religious institutions and their products and urges that we rise above the present mediocrity by fresh and intense analysis that would lead to new heights. He points out "that we are inclined to interpret the present religious revival mainly as a justification of our customary programs and ways of doing things," that we say, in effect: continue the status quo and everything will be fine. To his charge of mediocrity, no one will take exception. However, one phase of the problem that should receive special consideration is the faulty notions regarding the function of the rabbi in America.

The False Ideal of the Rabbinate

The congregation applies all of the slogans of American business advertising and salesmanship to the rabbinical office. The American rabbi is supposed to "sell himself" to his congregation. The competitive spirit of the market place is brought into synagogue affairs. The rabbi is supposed to be aggressive and get adequate publicity for himself and his activities. I hear tell (and it is more than rumor) that in certain large congregations there is a tacit understanding that the educational director serves also as publicity man for the rabbi.

To be genuinely modest about one's achievements or abilities is not considered a virtue for an American rabbi. To find time for study and reading is difficult unless one rises at a very early hour (before the morning telephone calls start). In large cities, rabbis spend most of their time traveling to and from weddings, funerals, unveilings, and meetings. During 10 months of the year, it is one long merry-go-round ride. Hence the element of solicitude and privacy mentioned by Goldin as a necessary part of each day's religious living is lacking and we have neither peace of mind nor time for spiritual replenishment.

Rabbis are judged, too, by how much money they can raise for this or that cause, how many offices they hold in various organizations, how many chairmanships they acquire. Truth to tell, many of our rabbis know in advance that they cannot possibly give adequate time to a certain office or cause and yet they permit themselves to accept the post for reasons of prestige and honor.

Many other items could be added to the indictment. Our theological schools also are caught in the same web of "business" standards and judge their students and graduates accordingly.

The Spiritual Dilemma of the Rabbi

The foregoing description of attitudes and standards represents the exact opposite in virtues of what a religious or pious person is supposed to stand for. One does not have to judge by the virtues and standards described in Schechter's essay on "Saints and Saintliness." (Studies in Judaism—Second Series) to see that we are caught in a web of contradictions as to what we teach and what we are expected to be. Perhaps the problem goes deeper. As Karen Horney in her "Neurotic Personality of Our Time" points out concerning contradictions in modern society, there is a conflict between competition and the desire for

success on the one hand and brotherly love and humility on the other. Everything is done to spur us to success. This means we must be assertive, aggressive and able to push others out of the way. At the same time we are imbued with ideals which declare that it is selfish to want too much for ourselves, that we should be humble and yielding.

There are two solutions to this dilemma: one, to operate with one set of standards and discard the other. This means that the rabbi either must become an "aggressive supersalesman" or, if he chooses the side of ideals and humility, must resign himself to being looked upon (as values go in our environment) as an unworldly dreamer. To try to take both horns of the dilemma leads to serious inhibitions in both directions and an ineffectual unhappy personality.

Most rabbis, whether for reasons of economic security or for other reasons, try to be aggressive and conform to the pattern expected by an American congregation. Acting alone, individual rabbis can do very little to change this situation or revise the prevailing standards, evaluations and attitudes.

Apparently the problem is not new. Solomon Schechter in his "Epistles to the Jews of England" (published in the London *Jewish Chronicle* in 1901) tells of a conversation with an east European Jew, who had observed Jewish life as lived in western Europe. Among other things he says to Schechter: "You of the West incessantly prate about spiritual *religion,* whilst we insist upon spiritual *men.*" . . . "When you speak of your leaders, you praise them as 'men of affairs,' 'great organizers,' 'finished orators,' 'suave diplomatists,' 'statesmen,' and similar expressions, all of which have a certain ring of worldliness and worldly success about them, suggesting the acting of a part, and the acting it well. When *we* get enthusiastic about our rabbis or *tzaddikim,* we describe them as 'sacred unto God,' 'holy and pure,' 'contrite of spirit' (*tzerbrochene Jüd*), or as 'men hiding themselves in the stuff' (I Sam. 10:22), and by similar phrases, conveying the idea of an ascetic life, a shrinking from publicity,—religious delicacy." (Italics ours).

Some Suggestions for Improvement

All the above mentioned items are part of the climate in which we live and do our work. Most rabbis are compelled to spread their time and energy over a wide area of public relations and inter-faith work, Jewish education, club activities, fund raising, plus pastoral duties. They are jacks of all trades with the danger of being masters of none. Spreading their efforts over too wide an area means mediocrity. Will more rabbis per thousand Jewish population help remedy the situation? Certainly not if we continue to operate as heretofore.

The creation of rabbinical specialists who would concentrate their efforts on one phase of rabbinical work under nation-wide synagogue setup merits serious consideration. At the same time the function or functions of the rabbi should be defined or, more important, delimited. He should not be expected to attend any and all meetings for any and all purposes.

Finally, if we are to rise above mediocrity there ought to be a few synagogues (subsidized if necessary) where new forms of services, prayer, and other rituals might be freely tried. I believe that one of the joys of military chaplains was the fact that they were a ritual committee unto themselves and could conduct a service to fit the needs of the men and the moment. Some new forms did evolve such as the mass recital of *Kiddush* and the reading of the Torah on Friday evenings. Had the war lasted longer, other

new forms would no doubt have evolved, geared to a military setup.

Most synagogues are too habit-bound to permit variation on a radical scale from the traditional service. Hence the need for an "experimental" synagogue. Just as effective synagogue melodies take hold and spread rapidly, so too new forms of ritual, if effective, would spread and take hold. Here again it does not necessarily follow that rabbis are the only ones who can or should compose prayers. We might do well to try a "combined operation" whereby a gifted writer and a rabbi sit down together for this purpose—the rabbi giving his ideas about prayer and specific thought content, the writer formulating the exact wording. The same would hold true of music, art and pageantry. This would be synthesizing the work of a board of specialists.

Ignoring these questions means keeping mediocrity in the saddle.

The Common Sense of Religious Faith

By MILTON STEINBERG

PART II—THE REASONS FOR RELIGIOUS FAITH

The following is the second of a series of three articles. In our preceding issue, Dr. Steinberg discussed "The Importance of Religious Faith" in satisfying the curiosity of the human mind, the hungers of the human heart and the aspirations of the human soul. He discussed the relations of religion to science and the reasons why science cannot take the place of religion. The concluding article, which will appear in our next issue, will discuss "The Nature of Religious Faith."

—EDITORS

RELIGION'S world outlook centers about God.

Before attempting to indicate what we mean by that word, let us first make clear what we do not mean.

"God" does not denote an old man on a throne somewhere up in the sky. That notion is in part a survival of the infancy of the human race, in part a hangover from our personal childhood, from those days when, having first heard about God and possessing only limited intellectual resources, we pictorialized Him according to our naivete. However the conception is come by, it is far less innocent than is generally supposed. It impels many a person to regard himself as an atheist, simply because he does not believe that there really is an old man in the heavens. On the other hand, it condemns individuals capable of ripe spirituality to the stuntedness, perhaps lifelong, of puerile, unsatisfying and undignified convictions.

The Idea of God

To believe in God, maturely, intelligently, is to believe that reality did not just "happen," that it is no accident, no pointless interplay of matter and energy. It is to insist rather that things, including man's life, make sense, that they add up to something. It is to hold that the universe, physical and moral, is a cosmos not an anarchy—made a cosmos instead of an anarchy, meaningful rather than mad, because it is the manifestation of a creating, sustaining, animating, design-lending Spirit, a Mind-will, or to use the oldest, most familiar and best word, a God.

Here at last we come to the crux of

our investigation. Are there any reasons for maintaining that the world is of this character rather than that, that Deity rather than Nullity moves behind and through it?

There are such reasons, not one but a number, all good, indeed compelling.

I. The Intellectual Reason for Faith

God is the only tenable explanation for the universe.

Here we are, creatures of a day, in the midst of a vast, awesome world. Sometimes it strikes us as a big, blooming tumult. But through the seeming confusion some traits persist, constant and all-pervading.

Thus, the universe is *one,* an organic unity, subject everywhere to the same law, knitted together with interdependence.

Again, it is *dynamic,* pulsating with energy, movement, life.

It is *creative,* forever calling new things into being, from stars and solar systems to new breeds of animals, new ideas in the minds of men, new pictures on the artist's canvas.

It is *rational* in the sense that everything in it behaves according to law! Electrons and protons according to the rules of their being, plants in harmony with their nature, animals after the patterns of their respective kinds, and man in consonance with the mandates not only of chemistry, physics and biology but of psychology and the moral order as well. Everywhere: form, design, predictable recurrence, law.

The universe, furthermore, is *purposive*: at least it is in some of its phases. An insect laying its eggs in a place where the larvae yet to be born will be assured of food as they will require it; a spider weaving its web, a bird building a nest, an engineer designing a bridge, a young man charting his career, a government drawing up a policy, a prophet blueprinting a perfected mankind—all these are instances, rudimentary or advanced, conscious or instinctual, of planning ahead. Purposiveness is indisputably an aspect of reality, and no theory can be said to explain the latter if it does not account for the former as well.

The universe further contains *consciousness.* It has produced man. At least in him it discloses intelligence, a thirst for truth, sensitivity to beauty, a desire for goodness. And man is a component of reality. Whence it follows that no explanation of the entirety can be acceptable if it does not illumine the existence and nature of this most complex, challenging and mysterious of its components.

This then is the world in which we live: one, dynamic, creative, rational and inclusive of elements of purpose, consciousness and goodness. For such a universe the religious theory is by far the best "fit." Only *it* accounts at all adequately for the striking features just enumerated. That is why men of all eras, cultures and capacities, including most of the world's great philosophers, have tended so generally to arrive, no matter what their point of departure, at some kind of God-faith. For, once one begins to reflect on the nature of things, this is the only plausible explanation for them.

But what about the evil of the world? Can the God-idea account for *that*? Not entirely, and not to anyone's complete satisfaction. This fact unquestionably counts against faith. On the other hand, there are many interpretations of evil from the religious viewpoint whereby its existence can be reconciled, partially if not thoroughly, with the existence of God.

But even if evil were a total mystery on which theology could not make so much as a dent, the God-faith would still be indicated. For, at the worst, it leaves less unexplained than does its alternative. If the believer has his troubles with evil,

the atheist has more and graver difficulties to contend with. Reality stumps him altogether, leaving him baffled not by one consideration but by many, from the existence of natural law through the instinctual cunning of the insect to the brain of the genius and heart of the prophet.*

This then is the intellectual reason for believing in God: that, though this belief is not free from difficulties, it stands out, head and shoulders, as the best answer to the riddle of the universe.

2. The Emotional Reason for Faith

The second reason for belief in God is that man cannot live joyously, hopefully, healthily, perhaps not at all, without it.

Consider what the universe and man look like under the atheistical assumption.

Reality appears totally devoid of point or purpose, a veritable "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Like everything else, man is seen as a by-product of a blind machine, his history a goalless eddy in an equally directionless whirlpool, his ideals random sparks thrown off by physiochemical reactions in the colloidal solution, compounded by chance, which is his brain. Everything adds up in the end to exactly nothing.

What is the consequence of such a view for man and society? Can it be other than discouragement, demoralization, despair? What else shall one say of it except that "that way madness lies."

Now consider what face the universe takes on once God is assumed.

Because there is Intelligence behind it, its countenance is now intelligible not vacant. The things that exist both within and without ourselves cease to be capricious, irrational and isolated episodes. To the contrary, they are bound together into unity, reasonableness and pattern by the Mind and Being before which, by virtue of which, they exist.

The spectacle unfolding before our eyes, this awesome pageant which has for its actors stars and atoms, plants, animals, and men, our private worlds of thought and feeling—this is a pageant after all, executing a design, spelling out a message.

What is more, it is a friendly visage which, given God, the universe turns upon us. The suns flaming in space are not altogther alien to us; trees, blades of grass and beasts are all our kin, near or remote; and we humans, for all our differences and contentions, are brothers one to another by virtue of the Father we share.

As the God-faith transforms the cosmic countenance, so it illumines the darkness within ourselves. It dispels the misgiving lest our strivings serve no purpose, lest our ideals be mere idiosyncrasies, without validity beyond ourselves and hence doomed to extinction with us. Instead, our aspirations come to be seen as refractions of God's purpose, our struggles as elements in the working out of the divine scheme. Before us opens an exit from our human impasse. Frail and short-lived though we be, we can still transcend our limitations by serving God's will, advancing His design and so partaking, by identification, of His infinity and eternity. Finally, the God-faith sends us into the battle for the good in ourselves and society with heightened morale. We know, as we join issue wih the forces of evil, that we do not fight alone. In the face of seemingly insuperable odds we can reassure ourselves with the words of the prophet: "Fear not; for they that are

* For a fuller exploration of the problem of evil in the light of the general position of this essay, the reader is referred to the author's *God and the World's Evil* in THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, Vol. IX, No. 6, April 30, 1943.

with us are more than they that are with them" (2 Kings 6:16).

Such are the emotional states distilled respectively by denial of God and by the affirmation of Him. Between them, who can hesitate?

3. The Ethical Reason for Faith

Man's moral life requires belief in God.

Under atheism, as we have just seen, all ideals depreciate in value. Regarded as the creations of cosmic chance, if not indeed as the expression of mere human preference, they lose in validity and authority, until, in the end, the reasonableness of their continued observance comes under question. Men begin to ask themselves what logic there may be to devotion and self-sacrifice on behalf of ethical principles and human welfare, if these principles are as rootless and man's career as pointless as the atheist position implies.

That this is the upshot can be seen from Bertrand Russell's *The Free Man's Worship,* one of the noblest and most thoughtful statements of irreligion ever penned. Mr. Russell is a rare atheist; he is a thorough enough logician to follow his premise to its consequences, and is too earnest to prettify them once he has discovered their true character. He grants point blank that from his point of view there is neither basis nor sanction for moral ideals.

These, he concedes, are altogether alien and inappropriate in a blind world machine. Nevertheless, Mr. Russell concludes, he will cling to them. Not that he has any foundation or logic to justify them. He accepts them, as he is frank to admit, arbitrarily, capriciously, in part because, thanks to indoctrination and habit, he has come to love them; in part, *zu l'hachis,* as it were, to defy and spite an uncomprehending and soulless universe. All of which is noble, if a bit theatrical, of Mr. Russell. But it is far from constituting an adequate basis for ethics. And it leaves unanswered the question of what Mr. Russell would have to say to persons who insist on logic to their morality and who wait for arguments more convincing than a dramatic gesture before they will be persuaded to dedicate their lives to the classic ethical code.

The very origin of our higher moral aspirations supports the thesis immediately before us, that a close connection exists between them and religion. Ethical conceptions such as the worth of the individual, human brotherhood, the future regeneration of mankind are not self-evident. None of the great, ancient civilizations, not even the Greek or Roman, attained to them. Even in our time acceptance of them is far from universal.

These principles were first formulated by the prophets of Israel in association with their God-faith and, in part at least, as inferences from it. Not that the prophets first framed their theology and then proceeded systematically to deduce a morality from it. History is never that precisely logical. As a matter of fact, the faith of the prophets and their ideals evolved pretty much side by side, with now one element, now the second, ahead of the other and stimulating it, now both being prodded by social circumstance. But the special theology of the prophets, their doctrine of a God, who is a universal spirit, just, merciful, holy, was an ever active agent in the development of the Jewish conception of the good life.

From the theology the morality flows directly, unswervingly, irresistibly. If every person incarnates God, then every person is sacred, too precious to be oppressed or degraded. Because every man embodies the Divine uniquely, he is entitled to an opportunity for the expression of his individuality. Since all men manifest God, they are brothers, owing

each other the duties of brotherhood. Since God is good and rational, the present world order, marred by evil and irrationality, cannot be His final work. Some day it must yield to another, more truly reflective of His nature, a perfected society of perfected men, the Kingdom of God.

In other words, the ideals we take for granted are not self-generating. In historical actuality, they came into being in relation to a particular God-faith, in which they find their theoretical justification to this day. Whether they can long endure without it is, as the instance of Bertrand Russell has suggested, profoundly questionable.

Ideals, be it remembered, demand self-sacrifice, and self-sacrifice has to appear justified or it will not be undertaken. A man may give up his comfort or lay down his life for something that seems to him to be worth the cost. But who will do either for what is regarded as of superficial value or of none at all? Yet, in the light of atheism, ideals can be no more than the phosphorescence emitted by physiochemical processes within the organic compound which is man? And as for mankind, in the eyes of an irreligionist, it must appear as only a bigger accident than he is. And is it for such as these that a man may reasonably call on himself to suffer and perhaps to die?

But is this fair to atheists? Have not some of them been among the most unselfish and self-forgetting of mortals? And on the other hand, are not, many of the most bestial and least idealistic of human beings religionists?

No, what we have just said, had it been said *of atheists,* would have been grossly unfair. But it does no injustice whatsoever to *atheism,* the inescapable effects of which are to trivialize ideals, to present the human enterprise as a futility, and so to undermine the classic ethic of justice, mercy and self-negation on behalf of moral principle and human welfare.

But if so, how is one to account for the goodness of so many irreligionists? Very simply. Men often behave better than their philosophy. Only, they cannot be expected to persist in doing so. In the end, how a man thinks must affect how he acts; atheism must finally, if not in one generation then in several, remake the conduct of atheists in the light of its own logic.

The fact of the matter is that most irreligionists, Bertrand Russell included, are living by the Judeo-Christian morality which follows from Judeo-Christian theism. At the same time, they profess a world outlook which in all its implications denies the code to which they conform. Eventually the contradiction between theory and practice must reveal itself. Then one or the other will give way. Either disbelievers will yield to the pressure of their doctrine and begin to act on its implications, or, refusing to accept the implications, will have to work back to a philosophy which sanctions the morality by which they desire to live, by which alone society can endure.

It is just such a crisis in choice on a mass scale through which mankind seems to be passing right now.

For several centuries irreligion has advanced steadily, all, it seemed, without appreciable effect on human behavior. The bulk of men continued, it appeared, to be about as good or as bad as they had ever been. And then suddenly new moral cults emerged. In ever increasing numbers, men began openly to deny the worth of the human personality. (They had always acted in denial of this principle, but this was the first time in two thousand years that they repudiated it publicly). They preached the glorification of violence and conquest. They deprecated

justice and mercy. They rejected overtly the notion of the brotherhood of man.

What had been happening, all unobserved, within the human spirit? What, except that having adopted irreligion, men were beginning to be in earnest about its thoroughly unmistakable directives for conduct?

When the props beneath an edifice rot away, it does not fall immediately. The decay is likely to be gradual, and slower in some areas than in others. Again, the building may hold together by inertia and the interweaving of its parts. But ultimately a collapse must come. This, there is reason to believe, is what we are now undergoing: a moral breakdown consequent on the disintegration in modern man of religious faith.

The God-belief then is necessary to morality. For, without it, moral values turn arbitrary, even trivial; self-sacrifice for an ideal becomes irrational; the life of the individual loses all direction except, of course, that of self-interest; society suffers and may in the end be ruined. Only on the faith which gave them birth do ethical values retain their vitality.

Some Afterthoughts to the Preceding Section

Two objections may remain in the reader's mind to the thesis just propounded, that the classic moral code is ultimately dependent on the classic religious outlook.

The first of these is: What of the religious immoralist? What of the man who professes all the correct doctrines and performs all the prescribed rituals, and then behaves like a beast of prey? What of pious tyrants like Francisco Franco, and devout exploiters like Judge Elbert Gary, and religious racialists whose number is too great for telling?

Yes, they exist, men of this ugly stripe. If people are often better than their philosophy, they are, alas, often worse. They may refuse to draw the inferences of their doctrine, or, having drawn them and found them unwelcome, may suppress, pervert and corrupt them.

The point, however is, that the religious immoralist is acting contrary to his convictions, is either consciously or unconsciously a hypocrite, whereas the irreligious immoralist is thoroughly consistent with his creed.

In other words, a man's world outlook exerts a steady pressure on his conduct. That pressure may be diverted or resisted for a time, perhaps for a long time, but in the end it must make itself felt.

The second question which may be present in the reader's mind is this: cannot self-interest and fear be relied on to keep men in line, regardless of their philosophies? Suppose it be true that the religious position leads to one pattern of behavior and the irreligious to another, what difference does that fact make when men know that no one can be secure unless every one behaves himself, when they are aware in addition that society has weapons with which to punish deviations from its codes.

Unquestionably, some respect for law derives from considerations of this sort. Some, but never enough. First, the policeman is not always at hand. Indeed, just when he is most needed, in the hour of social crisis, he is likely not to be on the job at all.

Besides, it would be a sorry morality which is no more nor better than the law requires and the policeman can enforce.

As to the argument from self-interest, let us not be naive. True, the classic morality is essential to the health and survival of society. But the convinced immoralist knows perfectly well that he can rely on the good citizenship of his fellows. No matter then what his own

sins, society will keep on running, dispensing its benefits and securities not only on the righteous, who have earned them but (so long as he continues to avoid detection) also on a sinner like himself.

To be sure, once enough people begin to play fast and loose with ethical principles, society will suffer. It may even fall apart in the end. But not at once. *"Après moi,"* the immoralist admits, *"le déluge."* But it will be long after, and by the time it breaks he will long since have shuffled off this mortal coil. Finally, there are some situations in which both fear and self-interest work against morality, when a man will be safe if he violates ethical principle and most certainly in peril if he stands by it, and when the policeman, the state, indeed all organized society are aligned not for but against the right. What becomes then of honesty in the hands of those who urge on its behalf only that it is the best policy?

No, there is no trustworthy basis for the ethical life in either advantage or fright. These factors may cooperate with the angels; they cannot be counted to do so always, or at all adequately. Human virtue admittedly does not rest on one foundation only; it has many props and shorings. Among these, however, the strongest and ultimately the most indispensable is the knowledge that reality is of such a nature as first to commend the good and then to support and sanction it.

4. The Historical Reason for Faith

Man learns of God from history, from the directions in which it persists in moving.

Look back over the weary way mankind has traveled down the ages. Consider how, though with frequent and heartbreaking retreats and deviations, a line of progress can be drawn from points of departure toward goals—from insensibility toward consciousness and knowledge, from servitude toward freedom, from brutality and ruthlessness toward compassion and conscience.

Is such a movement, so insistent and cumulative, likely to be no more than a chance eddy in a reasonless flow? Or is it more probably the consequence of a great propulsion working through man and driving him?

Or consider the pattern of human affairs: how falsehood, having no legs, cannot stand; how evil tends to destroy itself; how every tyranny has eventually invoked its own doom. Now set against this the staying power of truth and righteousness. Could the contrast be so sharp unless something in the scheme of things discouraged evil and favored the good?

If all history bespeaks God, that of Israel testifies to Him with especial eloquence and clarity. For this is the people which first discerned His true nature, earliest identified itself with Him, and has longest sought to do His will.

And Israel is alive this day.

The nations it knew in its youth and first maturity are memories. Not so this people. Consigned to an iron destiny, armed against it only with faith, it has survived the ages and their rigors. What is more, its influence has with extraordinary consistency been exerted on behalf of justice, compassion, freedom and truth. And it has been creative far beyond its size and opportunities.

Jewish history demonstrates that the God-faith is life-giving, humanizing.

But is it likely that a belief will evoke such echoes from reality unless it is in tune with it?

5. The Mystical Reason for Faith

Among all peoples and in all times some men have made the claim of contact with God, insisting that in an intuition transcending sensation or thought

they have had first-hand experience of Him. The Prophets of Scripture brought such testimony, as did a variety of others; among Jews, numerous rabbis of the Talmudic era, Kabbalists and Hasidim; in the classical pagan world, Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus; among Christians, Augustine, the two Thereses and Jacob Boehme; and in the East a great company of Brahmans, Taoists and Moslems.

Now, these men and women, who are the world's mystics, have been of the most widely diverse backgrounds and temperaments. Yet, despite the many differences among them, they all report having undergone substantially the same spiritual episodes: an awareness, derived not from the senses or the mind but from some faculty beyond them, of the immediate presence of Ultimate Reality, a conviction of its goodness, so potent as to fill the soul with a feeling of illumination, purity and redemption. It is on such spiritual events, personally undergone, that mystics rest their doctrines concerning God, His nature and the good.

In the development of Judaism specifically, the role of mystics, though far from decisive, has been larger than is generally perceived. They had a hand in the making of the prophetic faith and morality. From time to time, they have rekindled the Jewish religion with their own fervor into incandescence. They are responsible for no slight part of its dynamism to this day.

Most of us, however, have never met with mystical adventures. What the mystic relates comes to us at second hand, on the word of some one else. We would be well advised therefore to credit it, if at all, with reservations.

Yet, even for incorrigible non-mystics, mystical evidences should carry some weight—about that which one would allow to some stubborn, widely diffused and self-consistent rumor. Being hearsay and hence inadmissible as formal testimony, no case may be built on it. Yet a reasonable person will reckon with it in his calculations. And if the judgment arrived at on other grounds happens to account for this also—so much the better, both for the judgment and it.

Book Notes

TWO RABBIS INTERPRET JEWISH FATE

EIN GEDENKBUCH, by Max Dienemann, published by Mally Dienemann, Haifa, printed in Great Britain, by Latymer, Trend and Co., Plymouth, 1946.

THE JEWISH HOME, by Ignaz Maybaum, J. Clarke and Co., London.

LEO Baeck, the revered spiritual spokesman of the first post-war conference of the World Union for Progressive Judaism in London, recalled in his powerful address to the assembly those "great men and great Jews" whom we lost in the course of the last few years. Among them he mentioned the well-beloved name of Max Dienemann, a brilliant speaker, sound thinker and enthusiastic progressive Jew, who saw the aim of his life in the creation of a "Neo-Jewish humanism" in the hallowed land of our ancestors. Max Dienemann, who had seen all the horrors of German concentration camps, was finally compelled to emigrate to England where Miss Lily Montague, the Dean of Liberal Ju-

daism, had offered him a friendly shelter. From there he went to Palestine to join his daughter and to realize his old plans of creating new progressive centers in the Holy Land. At this time, when all his friends thought him safe at last, he succumbed to the strain and distress of long years, which had broken his splendid physique.

We owe a debt of gratitude to his wife and faithful helpmate Mally Dienemann and to his friend Rabbi Italiener. They revived the portrait of this outstanding rabbi in an unassuming simple biography which, notwithstanding its simplicity, is a deeply moving historic document. Mally Dienemann wisely added some of her husband's last sermons. They were delivered in the days of direst disaster for the German Jews, and they reveal the man's innermost, courageous and humble piety —the soul of a "new Job," which will not soon be forgotten. It is to be hoped that these sermons find a congenial translator.

Among the few books which Dienemann reviewed during the last years of his life, was one by Ignaz Maybaum, then one of the hopes of the German rabbinate. This man, having been jailed by the Nazis and having undergone the same kind of tribulation that Dienemann had suffered, escaped to London and has since been doing a magnificent job in interpreting the meaning of Jewish fate to an unbelieving world. His book "The Jewish Home," is the third in an important series of books published by him. "Man and Catastrophe" gave the answer of the Jewish faith in the face of a world catastrophe. "Synagogue and Society" disclosed the urgent need of Jewish-Christian cooperation in the defense of western civilization. The third book, "The Jewish Home," reforges the main weapon in this peaceful battle of the Jew. The Jewish family, always the center of Jewish life, now becomes the strongest link between the single individual and the community. The significance of the family is interpreted with all the wisdom of Jewish tradition but also in the spirit of modern thought, both Jewish and Christian, from Marx to Cardinal Newman. Most of all, it brings the message of Franz Rosenzweig, the "last philosopher of traditional Judaism" (Agus). Judaism is not only Jewish thought, but Jewish life—for Rosenzweig as it is for the Reconstructionist movement. And perhaps this is the "Greater Judaism" which Rabbi Leo Baeck advocated in his address to the London Conference.

BERTHA BADT-STRAUSS

REALITIES AND VALUES

(*Continued from Page* 8)

We could profit by a revival of that traditional American policy.

▼

WE RARELY UTILIZE THESE columns to appeal for any philanthropic local institution. The number of such worthy projects is so great that we would have room for nothing else. We are making an exception, however, in favor of Goodwill Industries of New York, because in responding to its appeal, one can do so much with so little.

Goodwill Industries is a non-sectarian organization where about 150 former shut-ins—paralyzed epileptics, amputees, and other disabled—daily receive on-the-job training and employment in such skills and trades as dress-making, shoe-repairing, upholstery, furniture repair and construction, office operation, etc.

The appeal is for contributions of used clothing, furniture, toys and household articles. In reconditioning these articles, trainees acquire the skills which prepare them for self-support. Send all contributions to the organization's headquarters at 123 East 124th Street, New York.

Random Thoughts

THE abuse of any one of the four freedoms destroys the other three.

* * *

There was a period in American-Jewish life when Jews were Hebrews. Then they established Young Men's *Hebrew* Associations and Homes for Infirm *Hebrews*!

They knew then very little *Hebrew* and thought "Jews" meant "kikes."

Now Jews are Jews, and all the better if they know Hebrew.

* * *

Condoning evil in others, because of one's own *potential* guilt, may be saintly, but it is of questionable merit, when prompted by awareness of one's own *actual* guilt.

* * *

A few years ago the Dominican Republic was hailed by our philanthropists "of the Mosaic faith" as the new "Promised Land" for their persecuted co-religionists.

The one to promise that land was the director Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, who is described in "Blood in the Streets" by Albert C. Hicks as having begun "as a cowardly horse thief and bungling forger" and "has come to be one of the most powerful and dangerous men in the Western Hemisphere." His troops, at his order, massacred 15,000 Haitians and he is the instigator of daily murders in the streets of the Dominican Republic, according to Hicks.

It must have been then not only to divert the Jews from Eretz Yisrael, but also to have them spread their mission till it overtook Trujillo, that our philanthropists displayed such zeal for the Dominican Republic.

Miracle religion has nothing to do with ordinary human feelings. A medieval saint, Angela of Foligno, whose sainthood was based on the alleged performance of miracles, congratulated herself on the death of her mother, husband and children, whom she described "as great obstacles in the way of God."

* * *

Most people glorify inertia as stability, and tumbling from one makeshift to another as conservatism.

* * *

To rely upon reason does not mean to ignore the irrational in man and his environment. On the contrary, it means recognizing the irrational for what it is, and withholding from the attempt to make it appear rational.

* * *

In an address made before the American Library Association in the beginning of the summer of 1946, David E. Lilienthal said that the responsibility for atomic power must be entrusted to "those who have a deep faith in the human spirit, to whom the interests of human beings come first. That responsibility is not safe with men, in public life and private undertakings, to whom people are only a market—a market for new gadgets, a labor market with which to make new gadgets, a political market to be cajoled and organized and voted."

With Lilienthal holding such dangerous views, how could Senator Kenneth McKellar possibly endorse Truman's nomination of him as head of the Atomic Energy Commission?

* * *

Hasidism's main contribution to Jewish

life was its translation of Jewish religion into story, song and dance.

The stories were about the *Tzadikim*, the rabbis who exercised civil and religious authority over large numbers of Hasidim.

Though those were miracle stories, they gave new, vivid and dramatic expression to the spiritual and ethical aspects of Jewish religion.

Hasidic song and dance retrieved the intrinsic function of religious ritual.

We westernized Jews prefer to recite lugubriously in our seats: "O come, let us exult before the Lord; let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation."

Which, if we did, some usher would quickly remind us that we are in the synagogue and not in the bleachers.

* * *

On the most reliable testimony of scholars, Machiavelli was no Machiavellian, nor Nietzsche a Nietzschian.

On his own testimony, Karl Marx was no Marxist.

Among us Jews, Philo, Maimonides, Spinoza had a similar fate. Each one would have refused to subscribe to all that his disciples asserted in his name.

Why is that generally the case?

Because the master, seeing life whole, stresses the part which men ignore or fail to see.

But the disciple is so enamored of the part stressed by his master that he declares it to be the whole.

* * *

Poor Socrates! Plato idealized him, Xenophon popularized him, Aristophanes smeared him and the State killed him. Was there no one in those days to do him justice?

* * *

Collective selfishness gives men all the ardor and glow of self-sacrifice.

That is why its powers of destruction, as compared with those of individual selfishness even when multiplied by the ten-thousands, are like those of the atom bomb as compared with those of an ordinary bomb.

* * *

We hear that some of our people have religious scruples against crossing their t's.

We wonder to what extent they have similar scruples against dotting their i's.

* * *

"Modern is beautiful when styled to comfort" reads a sign in a show-window displaying furniture.

"Ancient is spiritual when styled to reason" might well be the motto for the furniture of the mind.

* * *

When students are given degrees at colleges and universities, they are informed of the "privileges and immunities thereunto appertaining."

Why are they not informed then of any duties and responsibilities thereunto appertaining?

"But that's only a medieval ritual," you will say.

All the more reason for changing a ritual when it has become outdated.

* * *

It is impossible to grow without outgrowing something.

* * *

When we hope for the best and are prepared for the worst, we find life is not so bad.

* * *

To avoid the Scylla of wishful thinking and the Charybdis of fearful thinking, we should learn to navigate the channel of sound thinking.

* * *

The solution of the Sphinx's riddle is not that its human head is a mere illusion and that only its tiger's paws are real.

Having failed does not mean being a failure.

* * *

Returning to some pre-modern universe of thought is possible for the modern man only in the same sense that it is possible to revisit the scenes of one's childhood.

People normally do that sort of thing to satisfy a feeling of nostalgia, but not with a view of finding there a permanent home.

Correspondence

"Halutziut for American Jews"—Two Critiques and a Reply

Sirs:

The history of words and ideas shows, as Jack J. Cohen rightly remarks, that their contents and meanings change very often as a consequence of the reinterpretations that subsequent generations apply to the original concepts. But whenever such semantic modifications occur, the ethics of intellectual honesty demand that the new interpretations be true to the original concept of the terms in question.

Cohen sets two main tasks for his American *halutzim,* if we understand him aright. The first task is to contribute to the survival of the Jewish people "by bringing about a more exalted conception of nationalism," which means nationalism of a cultural character or an internationalism "in terms of the inner life of the Jewish people." The second consists in "restoring content to Jewish communal life in America . . . in the strengthening of Jewish education institutions, and in the democratization of Jewish communal life." We have no quarrel with these objectives. Both of them are worthy and valuable. The question to be asked, however, is not whether these objectives are important or not. The question is: are they *halutziut?* In order to decide this question, we must obviously, establish first as clearly as possible, what *halutziut* is and means today in Palestine and within the Zionist movement.

Cohen, as well as anybody else who has even the slightest acquaintance with the history and reality of the pioneer movement, knows that its paramount objective is, of course, the re-building of Palestine—*binyan haaretz.* But if the pioneers had only this achievement set as their aim, they would not differ in any respect from any other Zionist group. All Zionists share in this objective. They differ only in their conception of how to rebuild, in their approach to the problem of the inner structure and ultimate social physiognomy to be given the rebuilt homeland. Here lies the rub. Here the *halutzim* differ from other Zionist groups. Their aim and ideal is the erection of a Jewish society in Eretz Yisrael founded on the principles and practices of co-operative living, the construction of a co-operative labor commonwealth. This, the co-operative, communal way of life, is the central idea of the *halutz* movement.

Cohen never even as much as mentions this basic element in the *weltanschauung* of the *halutz.* Only at one point and in passing does his article allude to the fact that there is something like a "slight" connection between *halutziut* and labor-Zionism. But even at this point he manages to look the other way. In his opinion this connection results from the international outlook and the international organizational ties both the labor-Zionists and the *halutzim* have. The fact is, of course, that this element is really secondary for both groups. It is a mere corollary following from their basic agreement on matters of ideological outlook, from their agreement on the conception of a progressive, cooperative social ideal.

What then has become of *halutziut* under the expert semantic manipulation of Rabbi Cohen? What has become of the central concept of *"avodah atzmit,"* the principle of productive self-employment in opposition to the capitalist exploitation of man by his fellowman? What has become of other main tenets of the *halutz* movement, of *"kibbush avodah,"* the conquest of work; of *"kibbush hasafah,"* the conquest of Hebrew as a language; of *"ezrah hadadit,"* the principle of mutual, neighborly help? The basic economic structure of the Palestinian labor-settlements is that of producers' co-operatives as distinguished from the consumers' co-operatives which exist in many progressive sectors of otherwise capitalist economies, for example in the Scandinavian countries and in the United States. What and where do the American *halutzim* that Cohen visualizes produce anything this way, except perhaps internationalism and a strengthened communal life?

If one wants to transplant the Palestinian *halutz* movement to American soil, if one intends to create *"halutziut* for American Jews" in earnest, then one has to investigate which of the main characteristics of the original conception can be adapted to an American environment. If one does not do this, one lays oneself open to the accusation of sailing under a false flag. If one recommends a *halutziut* that has been emptied of its essential content, then nothing remains of the original term but an empty word-shell.

Rabbi Cohen is concerned about the survival of the Jewish people—so are we. He

is concerned more particularly about the survival and strengthening of American Jewry —so are we all. Then, if we believe that the experiences and virtues of the Palestinian *halutz* movement can contribute to the survival of American Jewry, let us ask: where is there room and need for these qualities in the life of American Jews? There is room for an adaptation of *kibbush avodah* in the face of the top-heavy vocational structure of American Jewry. There is certainly room and need for a great deal of crusading pioneer spirit in stressing productive self-employed labor as against the benefits derived from manipulation or impersonal capitalist exploitation. We could do among ourselves with a goodly dose of mutual co-operation instead of the fierce dog-eat-dog philosophy of our over-competitive system. There is the whole value system of the typical middle-class and upper-class Jewish philistine to be fought against in order to rescue him from the dollar-chasing idolatry of his materialistic pursuits and from the degradation of his soulless leisure that so seldom lifts itself beyond the level of cocktail parties and bridge-games.

However, none of these objectives will be achieved through preaching them in the same way as our leaders, religious and political, preach the virtues and blessings of their creeds and political dogmas. The attainment of these ideals presupposes the adoption of the communal cooperative way of life in this country. It means the creation of an indigenous *halutz* movement on American soil.

If there is to be any talk about a "*halutziut* for American Jews," this must be the content of such an undertaking. There was a proposal along these lines in the pages of this very magazine in two articles by A. Elihu Michelson (Vol. 10, Nos. 16, 17). If the attempt should be made to transplant the pioneer way of life to the American soil, then this is the way: the creation of Jewish cooperative settlements in this country and environment. Only from such cells of the new life can radiate the strength and idealism that really deserve the designation of *halutz* spirit. Only this way will we be assured of getting hold of the substance of this spirit instead of its shadow.

ERNEST M. WOLF,
Los Angeles, Calif.

Sirs:

Although Rabbi Cohen's article on "Halutziut for American Jews" was a welcome break in the wall of indifference which has hitherto obscured American *halutz* efforts, and although many of the changes and situations which he would like to see are so generally desirable that no one could debate them, it is unfortunate that the net result of the article is to create an impression which is misleading.

Cerainly no *halutz* could object to the *rationale* for *halutziut* which he presents. It is with the underlying implication, or perhaps the emphasis, with which we disagree. Rabbi Cohen's theme is that a successful *halutz* movement from America is dependent upon the existence of "a strong, pulsating American Jewish life." It would therefore follow that precedence should be given to efforts to create such a community—a "sowing back," so to speak, into the American community, on the theory that a *halutz* movement would follow.

While not negating the desirability of such an American Jewish community, we feel that precisely the opposite situation prevails: A Jewish State in being, created with the full personal participation of American Jewish youth, is a pre-requisite for the existence of a vital American Jewish community. Any action which deters or delays the creation of the Jewish State is harmful to the eventual achievement of such a Jewish community. Given unlimited time and resources, including manpower, the question of which must come first would be academic. Under the present situation of limited personnel and resources, however, a priority must be issued, and it is our sincere belief that such a priority must go to Palestine's needs.

The values that are being forged or re-found in Palestine can have meaning for Jews in *galut* only insofar as they can identify themselves and their personal lives, even if vicariously, with the life of the *yishuv*. Publications, motion pictures, and even brief trips cannot bring about such a permanent identification. Only personal links with friends and relatives in Eretz Yisrael can bring home to Jews in *galut* the type of life that is being lived there, and what it means.

The two-way passage of ideas and values which has begun cannot succeed through the medium of *shelihim* and teachers alone—it must be created by the personal participation of people from every Jewish community in the building of Palestine and by the passing on of their experiences to those who cannot join them. Thus, we cannot agree with Rabbi Cohen that it is merely semantics to refer to service to the American Jewish community as *halutziut*.

Halutziut is service to the Jewish people through service to Palestine, along the lines and within the framework laid down by the *yishuv*. If that service is to be performed outside of Palestine (and who would dare say that Hannah Senesh and Enzo Sereni were not *halutzim?*) then it must be done at the direction of the competent authorities in Palestine. Without denying the need and worth of service to Jewish communities in *galut*, it is not

halutziut. Indeed, it is a "holding action" until such time as the Jewish State is functioning in the desired manner. Many of us have chosen the path of the *halutz* after years of work in the American community because we are no longer willing to fight the side battle amid the comforts and security of America while others engage in the frontal attack which will bring to us, also, the fruits of victory.

We write in such strong terms because of the American Jewish boys and girls who, in reading Rabbi Cohen's article may attempt to rationalize their continued comfortable existence in America by deluding themselves into thinking that they are more necessary to the American Jewish community than to the *yishuv.* We answer them by quoting a fragment of a letter received from our first *haver* to reach Palestine:

"Send us your best people, for the hardest job is here. There are enough who cannot or will not leave America to do the job there. We need every man, every woman, with a back and two arms. Come quickly and come to stay. Do not dally in Galuth Alley."

DAVID MACAROW,
National Education Chairman,
Plugat Aliyah, New York, N. Y.

I am grateful to both Dr. Wolf and Mr. Macarov for the opportunity to throw further light on *halutziut.* I appreciate particularly Dr. Wolf's remarks, inasmuch as I myself am a Labor Zionist. My failure to mention the part which Labor Zionism has played in the *halutz* movement was a serious omission, even though I cannot fully agree with Wolf's own suggestions as to how the *halutz* movement is to be applied to American Jewish life.

Both Wolf and Macarov agree in affirming that my use of the term *"halutziut"* was not a legitimate one. According to them, only a movement for actual settlement in Palestine can legitimately be called *halutziut.* While this may have been the original aim of the *halutz* movement, it no longer holds true. To cite one example, at its latest convention, Junior Hadassah voted to circulate among its members information as to the advisability and possibility of a service corps for Eretz Yisrael. Girls who enlist in this corps would serve in Eretz Yisrael for a few years in their selected fields and then would return to the United States. This may not be *halutziut* as envisaged by the early *halutzim,* but it reveals the same spirit.

I, for one, believe it is a good thing. Furthermore, the very word *halutziut* is a reinterpretation of a biblical term which referred to the advance guard of the Israelites. I believe that we need now a new reinterpretation of *halutziut.* Both the needs of the *yishuv* and the danger facing Jewish life in the *diaspora* call for the application of the *halutz* spirit to wider areas.

Dr. Wolf's assertion, that the correct application of the *halutz* spirit among American Jews is the reshuffling of our vocational structure, is at best inadequate. *Kibbush avodah,* with its stress not only on self-employment but on *Jewish* labor, may have been jusitfied in Eretz Yisrael while the *yishuv* was getting on its feet. More and more, however (unless partition occurs), it will be necessary to integrate the Arab and Jewish economies into a single unit. In America we already have such a unified economy. To apply *halutziut* here, in its economic forms, would mean that American Jewry should now organize its own economy. Jews would have not only their own agricultural colonies but their own manufacturing cooperatives and labor unions as well. The Jewish community in America, while obviously in need of a wiser vocational distribution, must achieve this within the framework of American economic institutions. Within this framework there is much need for applying the *halutz* spirit. Jews imbued with the "religion of labor" can help give American labor unions direction and can aid the American cooperative movement in realizing its potentialities. Dr. Wolf himself raises the question as to the possibility for survival of any separate Jewish movement along the lines of Rabbi Michelson's suggestion outside Eretz Yisrael. I should say there is no possibility of such survival.

Macarov creates a false dilemma when he says that the appeal for a strong American Jewish life implies that *precedence* should be given to it and that a *halutz* movement would then follow. I believe firmly that *part* of the task of building a Jewish communal life in this country is the encouragement of *halutziut* of all kinds. No question of priority is involved. *Halutziut* for Eretz Yisrael and for the Diaspora go hand in hand. As a matter of fact, one of the prime objectives of my paper was to show that *halutziut* in Eretz Yisrael is a vital need for the American Jewish community.

Nor can I agree that the authorities of the *yishuv* are competent to fulfill the needs of American Jewish life, any more than American Zionists can tell the *yishuv* how it should function. Together, however, they can plan for the needs of the Jewish people as a whole.

Finally, if Macarov thinks that service to the Jewish community in America is a comfortable existence, I can point out at least a few hundred odd jobs that will take all the courage, stamina, moral backbone and intellectual capacity of which he or anyone else is capable. The only way a Jew can live comfortably in America today is to escape Jewish responsibilities.

JACK J. COHEN